

# The Brethren Evangelist

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ADDRESS,

THE BRETHREN PUB. HOUSE,  
ASHLAND, Ashland Co., OHIO

ASHLAND, O., Feb. 23, 1887.

## Convention.

The committee appointed by the Dayton Convention, June 1883, met pursuant to call, in the Falls City church, Feb. 10, 1887, to take into consideration the necessity of calling another convention of the Brethren church. Many letters from eminent brethren and sisters were read and considered, and proved an efficient aid in determining the question under consideration. After prayerfully and thoughtfully considering the matter, the committee came to the following conclusion:

1st. We call a National Convention of the Brethren church to meet at Milford, Ind., on Wednesday, September 21, 1887.  
2nd. That said convention be composed of delegates from the different congregations of the church as organized upon the Bible-alone platform, suggested at the Dayton convention, and all others who desire to co-operate with the Brethren church in its work of restoring the union of Christians upon the principle that Christ is the only head of the Church, and the Gospel the only bond of union for Christians.

3rd. The number of delegates to be sent by the congregations to be determined by the congregations themselves, and we recommend that the larger congregations send two or more delegates, and the weaker may join with others in sending one delegate to represent two or more congregations.

4th. That the delegates need not be confined to the ministers or elders, and that the sisters as well as the brethren shall have a voice in its deliberations.

The need for a National Convention at this time is for the purpose:

a. The strengthening of the bond of social and spiritual union between the members of Christ's body, and to confirm them in their faith and practice of the gospel taught.

b. To afford the congregations an opportunity of co-operating together in general missionary and church extension work.

c. In completing the work of the Dayton convention in regard to receiving and acting upon the reports of the committees appointed by that convention.

We appoint, as a committee on arrangement for the reception and entertainment of the convention, John Dubbe, and the Brethren church at Milford, Ind.

To see to getting special rates on R. R's, A. L. Garber, J. H. Knepper, E. L. Yoder, Z. T. Livengood.

We appoint, the following

sisters, a committee to arrange for and suggest a plan for a woman's department of church work to be presented to the Con.: Mrs. Bessie Perry, Ashland, O.; Mrs. Laura Slotter, Col., Ohio; Miss M. M. Sterling, Masontown, Pa.; Miss Anna Arnold, Parson, Kan.; Mrs. Murray E. Sigerfoose, South Bend, Ind.

We suggest the following partial programme:

Convention meet at 9 o'clock a. m. 1. Devotional exercises, 2. Address of welcome by R. F. Mallott. 3. Response by E. L. Yoder in behalf of Executive Com. and convention. 4. Music. 5. Organization of the Convention.

The above is as far as the committee felt at liberty to arrange a programme for the business of the convention, leaving it for the convention at this stage of its proceedings to appoint a committee to arrange the order of business.

In order that the convention may be entertained at different stages of its deliberations, we appoint the following brethren to speak on the subject annexed to their names, at such times as the convention may see proper to call upon them.

The importance of organized and systematic effort to promote church work, Eld. H. R. Holsinger.

A defense of our church discipline and government, Eld. Jos. W. Beer.

The doctrinal differences between the Brethren and German Baptist Churches, Eld. S. H. Bashor.

Essays by the women, as the women's committee may have prepared.

Our educational interests, Eld. P. J. Brown.

The Sunday School work, Eld. A. D. Gnagy.

Usefulness of tracts and religious publications, Eld. J. D. McFaden.

The Macedonian Cry, Eld. A. J. Hixson.

Ashland College, Eld. H. R. Holsinger.

E. L. YODER, Chairman.  
W. J. H. BAUMAN, Clerk.

## The N. E. Committee's Work.

The last National Convention of the Brethren church was held in Music Hall, Dayton, O., June 6 and 7, 1883, and when the church convenes again next September more than four years will have intervened between the two conventions. During this time the propriety of holding another convention has been frequently considered—urged by some and opposed by others—the committee remaining passive—until it has at last seen proper to issue its call for another convention.

Those who may yet oppose a convention will bear in mind that their wishes have been respected for a long time, and Christian charity will teach them that they should yield in deference to the wishes of many brethren who long yielded in Christian courtesy to them.

The committee was counseled as a matter of precaution against censure, that a program of business be formulated and the matter be submitted to the several congregations for decision whether a convention based on the program submitted would be advisable, or necessary.

In considering this plan the

committee felt that such precaution was unnecessary from the fact that the proceedings of the convention would be prudential and not legislative, and its conclusions would be advisory and not mandatory; hence any congregation that would choose to be represented in the convention could do so without infringing upon the rights of the congregation that think best not to be represented, and if even less than a majority of all the congregations should see proper to send delegates the aim and objects of the congregations could not interpose a reasonable objection to the convention. The committee, however, had reason to believe judging from the general tenor of the correspondence received, that a large majority of the congregations would avail themselves of the opportunity to be represented in convention.

The few who opposed a convention did so chiefly because they feared that an attempt would be made to subvert the principles of gospel liberty in our congregational form of church government and establish a central hierarchy to dominate over the congregations as well as over the consciences of individual members.

The committee can assure such that no general demand for a change in church government seems to exist at present.

We believe that an attempt to formulate a creed or discipline by the convention would meet with even a more emphatic veto than that which characterized the rejection of the committee's report and led to the adoption of the New Testament as the discipline of the church by the Dayton convention.

To those who may think that the committee transcended its duty by formulating a partial program and assenting speeches to certain ones, as well as to those who wanted a complete program formulated, we have to say that the committee aimed to discharge its duty but without assuming any responsibility that might, consistent with its whole duty, be shifted upon the convention itself after it meets.

That the work of the committee may be subjected to adverse criticism is not at all unlikely but as it sought to discharge its duties with a sincere regard for the best interests of the Brethren church and in the fear of God they hope that their work will meet with general acceptance and approval.

E. L. YODER.

## Ordinances and Heretics.

Early last month an article was printed in these columns bearing the ponderous title of "Religious Ordinances a Bar to Liberty." It appears also that several of the statements made were also ponderous in some direction, if we are allowed to judge from the several complimentary letters received concerning it—complimentary in the way that persons are benefitted.

This week Bro. Beer publishes a reply to it, and allusion is made to one or more statements made in it by an article awaiting publication.

We do not purpose to enter into any discussion with the worthy and esteemed brethren; and it would have been well and good for them to have gone on and said what they had to

say, without making a reference to what was printed, in a way that the points of difference are made a personal matter between us. All we have to say about the matter is, that we profess our ability to maintain the statements we have made.

A religious ordinance is an established rite or ceremony. An established rite or ceremony may be gospel or anti-gospel. Baptism, footwashing and the Lord's supper are by no means all the religious ordinances there are in the world; and they are not such without being established. God has established them; but in many places man has undone it, so far as the practical performance is concerned.

We say now that established rites and ceremonies, in religion, are a bar to liberty, and that all past history shows that the tendency has been toward more strenuousness in religious proceedings. But tendency, like all other mortal powers, often finds its possessor driven in a contrary direction by contingencies.

In the practical Christian life the tendency has been toward more liberty, that is disregard of gospel humility and the admonitions against embracing the vanities of the world. This is the tendency to looseness we fear, and not that we are going to rashly turn around and denounce the doctrines we have believed and advocated.

"What is liberty?" asks our astute brother. There are at least two very full definitions. One is found in our dictionaries and the other is drawn from the word liberty as it is often used in late writings. A little experience will illustrate. We fell in conversation with a learned religious professor at one time and explained that we, the progressive element of the Tunker church, were more liberal than the other divisions; and in reply he remarked that there was no use in being so particular about baptism, that it did not matter whether a candidate was immersed or sprinkled, that it was only a ceremony at any rate, and one mode was just as good as another. His liberality put away footwashing, the supper, and loosened things up to such a degree that we were completely satisfied on the liberality line when he was done with us. There is a kind of liberality that is a virtue; but the popular modern liberality is of such a character that we are glad to thank the Lord that we have but little of it.

In this as in all other doings, we desire to be honest. We tell people plainly and unreservedly that we are partisan for Christ's sake, and make no claim to liberality. We mind our own business in religion, and bid everybody God speed in doing all the good they can. God has not appointed us as a special watchman over his doctrine, to see that it does not spoil or run away, or get too weak to be useful. We are puzzled to find time now to say our daily prayers without getting in a hurry, and now and then the daily scripture reading is neglected, and we fail to live out all the gospel as we should. How would it be then if we became a special guardian of the Lord's doctrine? Ah his doctrine is in the Bible and is secure; we need only to hold fast to it and do his commandments.

We pray that there may be no disposition among us to outbid other churches for the popular patronage. What we should aim to attain is a higher standard of spirituality and more purity of heart. To attempt to outrun the popular churches in pleasing the world, would be less wise than doing as Judas did when he hung himself; and to attempt to be only a sort of repository for doctrine will yield no more to our lasting honor than to be a sepulchre full of dead men's bones.

We need to be living members of the body of Christ.

Regarding the subject of heresy, we have only to say, that we do not understand the Apostle Paul to mean excommunication in Titus 3:10, and the modern use of the word certainly is different from the apostolic representative. To make a rule to expel all factious men, which is what the Greek word means, would be severe. But they are to be avoided; kept from holding official positions and performing any function as church leaders.

In 1 Tim. 4:7, we have exactly the same word, and there it would mean, excommunicate profane and old wives' fables. They ought to be excommunicated indeed; but it would seem to be small business for successors of Christ to go about pronouncing anathemas on old women's stories.

In 1 Tim. 5:11 we have the same word again, and there it means that the young widows should be denied as candidates for the order of Deaconesses, a class of women in the early church who were kept on the revenues of the church, or in other words were supported by the church, and in turn waited upon the sick, taught the younger sisters and children how to be Christians, and made themselves useful where the church directed.

This is a long story on this line, but it is not exhausted yet. "Men treat the gospel with indifference under the name of liberality," and brethren like Eld. Beer get in a very peculiar position if they claim liberality in Christian doctrine, as they are seen by the popular observer and average religious professor.

## The Convention at Milford.

Milford, Ind., is a place possessing many disadvantages for a National Convention, but for some cause the Committee agreed upon that place. We suppose the choice will not be looked upon as an omen of a re-acting of the drama of 1872, and as the place is chosen, there is no call now for telling why South Bend, Chicago, Dayton or some other city would have been a better choice.

Considering the place, it is not advisable to put forth an effort to make it more than a purely deliberative body, as accommodations for any thing more can not be provided without great expense, or placing a heavy burden on the Milford brethren; and the church should do neither.

Messrs. Peter Paul & Bro. Publishers and Booksellers, Buffalo, announce for early publication, a new book by the Rev. L. A. Lambert, author of "Notes on Ingersoll," entitled

## TACTICS OF INFIDELS.

The "Notes on Ingersoll" have now had a sale of 125,000 copies and still continues. The new book, "Tactics of Infidels," will be printed from new type ordered expressly for this work, on handsome toned paper, and will contain about 200 pages.